



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Lewis Burrell, age 19, and Eric Banks, age 24, both of Richmond, Virginia, pled guilty to drug trafficking conspiracy and firearm counts. Both are members of the Broad Rock Boys, a gang operating in the Broad Rock area of Richmond.

Burrell pled guilty to conspiring with others to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine and discharging a firearm in furtherance of that conspiracy. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Burrell will be sentenced to 22 years of imprisonment on those counts at a sentencing hearing later this week. Banks pleaded guilty to conspiring with others to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute Ecstasy and marijuana and to possession of a firearm by an unlawful drug user. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Banks will be sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment.

Burrell admitted that he conspired to distribute crack cocaine from approximately October 1, 2003, through May 31, 2004. He also admitted to using an assault style rifle that he had purchased a week earlier at a gun show, to shoot at rival gang members on May 31, 2004. During that gun battle, Burrell discharged the weapon and an innocent bystander, Abraham Reyna, was shot and killed. The shooting was the result of an on-going turf battle with rival gang members that arose due to a number of issues, including encroachment into drug territory.

Banks, an associate of Burrell, admitted to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and marijuana. He further admitted that he is an illegal user of controlled substances and that he possessed and discharged the assault weapon purchased by Burrell earlier on May 31, 2004.

Mr. McNulty stated: "There are few higher priorities for the U.S. Attorney's Office than stopping deadly gang violence in Richmond. These convictions represent a significant step forward in our continuing effort to make this city a safe place to live for the good citizens of Richmond."

Also announcing the pleas are John P. Malone, Special Agent in Charge, Washington Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; James Gregorious, Special Agent-In-Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Col. Rodney Monroe, Chief, Richmond Police Department.

This case was investigated by agents of the ATF, DEA and the Richmond Police Department and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Olivia N. Hawkins and Angela Mastandrea-Miller.

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